

# LEADER'S GUIDE

## PART ONE

*The*  
*Challenge*  
to  
TRUST  
on the  
Path to Peace



## NOTES TO THE GROUP LEADER

- This 50-day study has a sufficient amount of content and questions needed for a weekly group discussion, so this Leader's Guide does not have a significant amount of additional content. It does contain an introduction to read before each day's discussion and a few notes to begin and conclude your group's time together.
- Adapt the content of this study to the format and timeline that best suits your group. You may be leading a group that has an established flow and routine. Although it has a suggested 14-week timeline, arrange the days/chapters according to your group's meeting schedule.
- This study is intended to be self-reflective and deeply personal. It's important to make the group a safe place for each person to be transparent and honest which includes being non-judgmental and holding each other's confidences. Create a space that welcomes vulnerability and transparency and leaves no room for being judgmental or critical.
- If someone has to miss or gets behind in the readings, don't let that keep them from attending. Encourage them to join in the fellowship, prayer time, and discussion whenever they are able to be present.
- There may be more questions than you are able to discuss in your weekly meetings, so choose which ones work best based on the flow of discussion with your group. Your time constraints, the size of your group, and how willing everyone is to share will determine how many questions you can discuss from each day/chapter. Be flexible as God leads your group. It's okay not to discuss all the questions and to replace some with your own.
- There is a suggested 15-minute discussion for each day's content, but that is only a recommendation and can be adjusted to accommodate your group's time constraints.
- This study can be conducted in person, virtually, or a combination of both.
- Remember, as the group leader, you are not expected to know all the answers but to facilitate the discussion as God leads you. Your willingness to share your own answers and insights will encourage others to do the same. Be prepared to lead but also remember God sometimes takes a group's discussion in directions you may not anticipate, and that can be when the greatest growth and learning take place.

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK ONE



### WEEK ONE – LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

#### INTRODUCTION

#### PART ONE: LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

#### FOR THE LEADER

Be praying for each person God brings to your group. Pray for God to open their minds and prepare their hearts for His teaching. Pray the group will be a place where each person feels welcomed, cared for, and respected regardless of the differences among them. Pray for wisdom and discernment and that God would speak through you as you lead the group.

#### WELCOME & OPEN WITH PRAYER

Begin your time together with prayer and thank God for bringing together each person in your group. Ask Him to help create a safe place for everyone to share their hearts and be open to His teachings and His truths in the weeks to come. Share prayer requests among members of the group and provide an opportunity to pray for one another, or you can choose to pray for the group. Commit to praying for each other throughout the week.

#### GROUP WARM-UP

Ask each member of the group to briefly introduce themselves. You may want to go first in order to set the precedent for how detailed or how brief the introductions should be. You may want to ask them to also give a fun fact about themselves—for example: *Do you have a pet? What is a favorite gift you have received? Where would you like to travel one day?*

#### INTRODUCTION

PAGE 1

Read aloud the book's **INTRODUCTION** (page 1).

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#### PART ONE: LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

PAGE 3

Read aloud **PART ONE: LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN** (page 3). Discuss each element of the book and what will be expected of the participants each week. Encourage them to ask any questions they may have. Remember to customize the format, timeline, and discussion to fit the needs of your particular group.

**Following are some additional thoughts for your consideration on each element of the book as discussed on pages 4-5.**

- *Challenge Questions*: Encourage the group members to make time to reflect on the questions and take time to write down their responses. The more thought and reflection given to the questions and the more honestly they answer them, the more they will gain from the study. Remind them they will always have the option of whether or not to share their answer in the group but to at least write down a response, so they will have it to look back and reflect upon.
- *In His Word*: Encourage your group to use the verses to study more deeply what the Bible says about the topic for the day. They may choose to look up one verse or all three, and they may choose to study the additional verses one week and not the other. Although it is not required for the study to be meaningful, the simple act of opening the Bible each day and reading God's Word has the power to be life-changing.
- *Practicing Trust*: This is an incredibly important part of the daily study—where the group is taking what they are learning and putting it into practice. Encourage them to reflect on the attribute of God from the verse for that day and to take a moment to think of a real-life and current circumstance they are facing in which they would find it helpful to remember that quality of God. This study is intended to change habits and ways of thinking and to increase one's understanding of God's character, and this is the section each day to practice that.
- *My Prayer*: Encourage each person to make this their own prayer, not simply one they are reading from a page.
- *Suggestion Box*: Some of these will seem interesting and applicable, and some will not. Everyone can use them as an inspiration to come up with their own list (and borrow ideas from others) of things to do to calm their heart and mind when troubled. As titled, they are simply *suggestions*.

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- *Songs of Trust*: The QR code connects the reader to a page on cindyjanecka.com where the daily songs will be available on YouTube (free to view), as well as Spotify and Apple Music (both require subscriptions to listen to more than a sample of each song). People's preferences in music vary, but the lyrics and truths of these songs are universal. Encourage your group members to build a playlist of songs or hymns that encourage them to focus on God's character and inspire them to trust Him more deeply.

#### TIME TO TALK: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is one thing you hope to gain from this study?
- Think of someone in your life who exemplifies a deep trust in God and explain why you think that about them.
- Why might this study be challenging for you?
- What can we learn from the following verses about trust? "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6

#### WRAP IT UP

**Read aloud these concluding thoughts on Week One from Cindy:**

*As you begin this journey together, I encourage you to share honestly and openly what God has taught you about your ability or inability—and your willingness or unwillingness—to trust God more fully. I have had the joy of teaching a wonderful group of ladies in a weekly Bible study, and I have learned some of the most powerful lessons God teaches me come through hearing what God is teaching each of them. Many times if we will really listen, we can hear God speak through the lives of those around us. I have no doubt God has led you to be part of this study and, hopefully, learn more about Him and His character. So let's encourage each other and hear each other as we learn and grow together. This study is written to challenge you to trust while also helping you address the challenges you face when doing so. As you continue to explore the Scriptures for God's instructions to trust and His promise of peace, it is my prayer that your hearts be encouraged and your faith be strengthened. May God bless you and lead you as you embark on this journey.*

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#### FOR NEXT WEEK

Remind everyone to read Days 1-3 and take time to complete the *Challenge Questions*, reflect on the verses *In the Word*, and identify how they are *Practicing Trust*. Encourage them to be ready to share their answers and the insights God has shown them.

#### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask one of the group members to close your time with a prayer.



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**LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK TWO**



**WEEK TWO – LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN**

DAY 1 THE CHALLENGE TO TRUST

DAY 2 TRUST IS COMPLICATED

DAY 3 EMOTIONAL WALLS

**FOR THE LEADER**

Be praying for your group members to find time during their busy lives and schedules to read the material and thoughtfully answer the questions for each day. Continue to pray your group will be a safe place that fosters trust and openness in your discussions. Pray for wisdom and discernment and that God would speak through you as you lead the group.

**WELCOME & OPEN WITH PRAYER**

Begin your time together in prayer. Encourage members of the group to share their prayer requests. Provide the group an opportunity to pray for one another, or you may choose to pray for the group. Also commit to praying for each other throughout the week.

**DAY 1 THE CHALLENGE TO TRUST (15 MIN)**

PAGE 7

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 1:**

*In the reading for Day 1, I describe how a friend of mine made a comment about how much he admired my ability to trust God and instead of proudly patting myself on the back, I was actually very perplexed and quite humbled. Of course, I was grateful that he saw something in me that reflected my faith in God, but at the time, there were definitely areas of my life in which I felt I was doing everything but trusting Him. So what did my friend see in me? And what was I missing? I really didn't understand. That comment—and my confoundment as a result—set me on this years-long quest to discover what it means to truly trust God. What does trusting look like? Why am I able to do it successfully in some areas of my life and yet feel like a complete failure in others? Let's just say, there were lots of questions.*

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*I began my journey by scouring the Scriptures for verses that referenced trusting God. I read about God's commands to trust and His promised blessings when we do so. I read about the journeys of people from the Bible who trusted well and those who faltered. I even read a few books (which is unusual for me). I realized there are lots of examples in the Bible of faithful men and women who fluctuated in their trust in God, and thankfully, God always provided a way for them to re-place their trust in Him, and He has provided me a path to do the same. I just needed to discover what that path looks like and what is required to walk it.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 10)

- Why do you want to deepen your trust in God?
- Write a Bible verse that has offered you encouragement in difficult times.
- Why has that passage been particularly meaningful to you?
- List three things you would like to achieve by completing this study:

#### *In the Word* (Page 11)

According to the following verses, what are some of the benefits of placing your trust in God?

- Jeremiah 17:7–8
- Psalm 112:7
- Psalm 62:8

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 11)

- Read 2 Samuel 7:28. Because God is trustworthy, what is something you can trust Him with today?

## DAY 2 TRUST IS COMPLICATED (15 MIN)

PAGE 13

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 2:**

*My search of the Scriptures and my pursuit of a greater understanding of trusting God led me to a very convicting lesson. Throughout the Bible, God clearly commands us to trust Him, and when we are not trusting, we are being disobedient. That has been a hard truth for me to accept, but it has changed my perspective and provided even more motivation to pursue this challenge to trust. Just as the stories of people's lives in the Bible vary greatly, so do each of ours. My family, upbringing, experiences, and heartaches differ from yours. Those I trust in my life— God, family, or friends—may be the very ones in*



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*your life that present the greatest challenge to your ability to trust. Most of us carry some degree of the scars of broken trust, and those reminders can be difficult to overcome. So as we endeavor on this journey together, it's important that we give each other the space and the grace to travel at whatever pace is needed. Just as our experiences differ, so will our journeys on the path to trust.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 16)

- Name one or more people in your life you trust and how they have earned your trust.
- Who in your life has broken your trust, and how has it impacted your ability or willingness to trust other people?
- How has the broken trust of others impacted your ability or willingness to trust God?
- Why do you think God commands us to trust Him?
- Have you ever considered your lack of trust to be an expression of your disobedience to God? Is there an area of your life in which you need to seek God's forgiveness for not trusting Him more fully?

#### *In the Word* (Page 17)

What do the following verses say about trusting God?

- Psalm 9:10
- Psalm 31:14–15
- Isaiah 50:10

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 18)

- Read John 16:13. Because God is truth, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### DAY 3 EMOTIONAL WALLS (15 MIN)

PAGE 19

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 3:**

*Our emotional make-up and personalities also vary. You may be one whose emotions don't often fluctuate, and perhaps you aren't consumed with anxiousness. Maybe your thoughts don't race out of control, nor do you feel your world is out of control. It is not too difficult to draw a line from worry to lack of trust, but that same lack of trust can also be hidden behind a person's stoicism or emotional walls. You may be thinking that because you are not a worrier or a person who frets, you don't struggle*

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*with trusting God. That may, in fact, be true. However, I caution you from assuming this study is any less applicable to your life. Each of us has areas in which we can grow our trust and deepen our relationship with God. For some of us, those areas are more apparent, but for others, it takes an even greater effort and pursuit of self-awareness to uncover the strongholds which inhibit our ability to fully trust God. Although the ways in which our failure to trust God manifest themselves differently in each of our lives, we can all grow in our faith, as well as in our trust, if we will be open to what God is trying to teach us.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 23)

- Do you see yourself as open with others regarding your feelings or more guarded and less vulnerable? Do you prefer it that way? Why or why not?
- How can being emotionally guarded impact your relationships with others?
- How can it impact your relationship with God?
- How can building emotional walls reflect a lack of trust in God?
- How can trusting God more fully help you be more vulnerable and transparent with others?

#### *In the Word* (Page 24)

How is vulnerability modeled out in these verses?

- James 5:13–16
- Philippians 2:5–8
- 2 Corinthians 6:3–13

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 24)

- Read Psalm 145:3. Because God is great, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### WRAP IT UP

**Read aloud these concluding thoughts on Week Two from Cindy:**

*Just as trusting God looks different for each of us, so does our lack of trust in Him. Recognizing our own challenges to trust, understanding that trust is a complicated subject, and acknowledging the presence of emotional walls in our lives are all important steps as we set out on this journey to trust. In the weeks ahead, I encourage you to fill your mind with the Scriptures and commands to trust God and especially*

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*the beautiful rewards of doing so. Trust is, indeed, complicated, but God is faithful and will continue to show you how to be obedient to His command to trust. It is a command of grace because He knows full well the benefits and blessings you will experience when you are obedient to that command. Be patient with yourself, as well as with others, as you continue to explore the challenges of trusting God more fully. May God bless you and lead you as you continue on this journey.*

#### FOR NEXT WEEK

Remind everyone to read Days 4-7 and take time to complete the *Challenge Questions*, reflect on the verses *In the Word*, and identify how they are *Practicing Trust*. Encourage them to be ready to share their answers and the insights God has shown them.

#### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask one of the group members to close your time with a prayer.



## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK THREE



## WEEK THREE – LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

DAY 4 MISPLACED TRUST

DAY 5 THE MISSING PEACE

DAY 6 TO TRUST OR NOT TO TRUST

DAY 7 ARE YOU READY?

### FOR THE LEADER

Pray for God to draw in those to share who may be more hesitant to contribute or talk about their feelings and experiences. Ask Him to give you the insight and the words needed to draw them into the discussion. Pray for wisdom and discernment and that God would speak through you as you lead the group.

### WELCOME & OPEN WITH PRAYER

Begin your time together in prayer. Encourage members of the group to share their prayer requests. Provide the group an opportunity to pray for one another, or you may choose to pray for the group. Also commit to praying for each other throughout the week.

### DAY 4 MISPLACED TRUST (15 MIN)

PAGE 27

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 4:**

*As we have learned in the reading this week, we all place our trust in something or someone. Where we place our trust is that upon which we build our security, self-worth, and self-confidence and may be easily recognizable or be a pattern that has slowly evolved over time, escaping our awareness. Most of us would agree our faith in God through Jesus Christ is our firm foundation—the rock on which we stand—but there are times we step off that rock (or fall off that rock) and find ourselves on shifting sand. The first step to firmly replacing our feet on that rock is to admit we have fallen off. We can recognize our misplaced trust by identifying the areas in which we find ourselves to be anxious or situations or people we are attempting to control.*

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#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 32)

- Which of the following areas do you sometimes depend upon to find security, self-worth, or self-confidence? (See the list on page 32.)
- Have these things proven to be a dependable source of confidence and hope for you? Why or why not?
- What will be one of the challenges you face as you seek to re-place your trust in God and away from these areas of your life?
- What would be helpful in your efforts to re-place your trust in God?

#### *In the Word* (Page 33)

According to the following verses, what are other areas in which we misplace our trust?

- Psalm 146:3
- Proverbs 28:6
- Proverbs 11:28

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 33)

- Read Psalm 59:9-10a. Because God is reliable, what is something you can trust Him with today?

## DAY 5 THE MISSING PEACE (15 MIN)

PAGE 35

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 5:**

*When I asked God to show me where I needed to strengthen my trust in Him, I realized where I lack trust is where I lack peace. That made it much easier to identify. Those moments of fear and insecurity and my efforts to control people or my circumstances—lack of trust. Difficulty sleeping with my mind racing—lack of trust. Feeling desperate to defend myself or be understood—lack of trust. Sometimes my worry manifests itself by going into major task mode. I may justify it as much needed or being productive, but it is often an attempt to exert control over my world (and emotions) when I feel like I am immersed in chaos. To remain at peace and be consumed with calmness—on the outside as well as inside—takes great and continual effort, but it must begin with recognizing where that peace is lacking.*

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#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 38)

- Why do you desire a deeper, more abiding peace?
- What prevents you from experiencing that peace?
- When you are not experiencing peace and your mind is invaded with worry, fear, or anxiety about something, how are the areas of your life affected? (See the list on page 38.)
- Before considering it is a lack of trust in God, how have you justified or explained your lack of peace in these areas?

#### *In the Word* (Page 39)

What do the following verses teach you about the peace God wants you to experience?

- John 14:27
- 2 Corinthians 13:11
- Proverbs 12:20

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 39)

- Read Judges 6:24. Because God is peace, what is something you can trust Him with today?

## DAY 6 TO TRUST OR NOT TO TRUST (15 MIN)

PAGE 41

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 6:**

*I have learned trusting God is not black and white. It's not all or nothing. I am sure there are areas in which you do trust God. Things that don't cause you to worry. Events that transpire which don't cause you to shut down or pull inward. Similar to so many of the stories in the Bible, each of our stories are riddled with trusting and not trusting. Trusting today but not tomorrow. Trusting this afternoon after failing at it this morning. Trust requires intention and persistence. As we talked about last week, trust doesn't come naturally for most of us. It is not our default. You have to decide to trust. Over and over and over again. Time and time again I face circumstances which require me to commit and recommit and recommit to trusting God. It is important we each identify the fluctuation of trust in our lives and the areas most deeply impacted.*

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#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 44)

- If a lack of peace usually indicates a lack of trust, rate on a scale from 1 to 10 how well you trust God in each of these areas of your life. (See the list on page 44).
- Choose three of the above areas in which you are struggling to trust God and describe ways you can work to deepen your trust.
- Do you find you are able to trust God more fully in a particular area of your life at one time and then struggle with lack of trust in that same area at another time? Why do you think that is?
- Do you see a pattern or similarities among areas with which you struggle or those in which you are more fully trusting, and if so, why do you think that is?

#### *In the Word* (Page 45)

According to the following verses, who will experience God's peace in their lives?

- Romans 5:1-2
- Isaiah 32:17
- Psalm 72:7

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 46)

- Read John 1:3. Because God is Creator of all things, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### DAY 7 ARE YOU READY? (15 MIN)

PAGE 47

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 7:**

*Any time God commands us to do something, Satan is going to work overtime to try and prevent us from doing that very thing. We need to recognize the ways attempts to obstruct our path to peace. He knows your weaknesses and preys on your vulnerabilities. As the name suggests, that is why this study is going to be challenging. That is why we need to have a friend to journey alongside us, someone who can be praying for us and encouraging us. I encourage you to identify that person in your life. They may live nearby or across the globe, but they can pray for you, encourage you, and hold you accountable on this journey. As you anticipate the freedom and peace that will come from trusting God more fully, also be prepared for the obstacles Satan will most certainly put in your path.*

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#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 50)

- How can you prepare for the spiritual battle Satan will pursue against you as you seek to trust God more fully?
- Why are you ready for the challenges which lie ahead in this study?
- What areas of your life might be particularly difficult to usher in change?
- In what ways do you desire your life to be different as you deepen your trust in God?
- List the name of someone you can trust with your thoughts and feelings when this journey becomes especially difficult. I encourage you to contact that person now, so they can encourage you, challenge you, and pray for you.

#### *In the Word* (Page 51)

What can you learn from the following verses that will be helpful as you identify areas in your life you want to change?

- Romans 7:15-20
- 2 Corinthians 5:16-17
- Philippians 1:3-6

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 51)

- Read Psalm 90:2. Because God has no beginning or end, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### WRAP IT UP

**Read aloud these concluding thoughts on Week Three from Cindy:**

*It is my hope and my prayer that you have allowed God to use the readings and questions this week to stir your heart. Identifying the areas in our lives lacking peace provides us the opportunity to grow our trust. I hope your answer to the question: "Are you ready?" is a resounding "Yes!" Although this study compels us to be challenged and stretched in new ways, I assure you the rewards far outweigh the efforts or the discomforts. Let's get busy claiming God's promise and keep walking down the path to peace. May God bless you and lead you as you continue on this journey.*



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## FOR NEXT WEEK

In the week ahead, we will begin to explore what can interfere with our ability and willingness to trust God more fully. It can be difficult to recognize these roadblocks in our lives, so it is important to be open to what God is calling us to see in ourselves. Remind everyone to read Days 8-11 and take time to complete the *Challenge Questions*, reflect on the verses *In the Word*, and identify how they are *Practicing Trust*. Encourage them to be ready to share their answers and the insights God has shown them.

## CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask one of the group members to close your time with a prayer.

